

SE08: Mirroring the CFS? National FAO Committees and inclusive multistakeholder approaches driving uptake of CFS policy products and food systems dialogues

Organized by: Sweden, the Swedish FAO Committee, Switzerland, and the Swiss National FAO Committee

Summary of the side event

The side event showcased the various ways in which National FAO Committees and other structures promote inclusive, multistakeholder-approaches to food systems governance and uptake of CFS products as well as food systems dialogues.

Corinna Hawkes, Director of FAO's Agrifood Systems and Food Safety Division, moderated the event and welcomed the audience and participants before inviting Christian Hofer, State Secretary at the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture to provide the opening remarks.

Mr. Hofer shared Switzerland's perspective and experience from having a National FAO Committee since 1947 and outlined how the Swiss National FAO Committee had informed national policies and debate.

Valéria Burity, Brazil's Extraordinary Secretary for the Fight Against Hunger, was the first speaker in the following panel discussion. Ms. Burity spoke about how Brazil promotes multistakeholder approaches for food security and the fight against hunger including through initiatives such as CONSEA and CAISAN. Ms Burity also highlighted Brazil's work related to School Meal Programmes.

Katarina Eriksson, Director Food for Development at Tetra Pak. Ms. Eriksson outlined how Tetra Pak works in public-private-partnerships, including with FAO in Colombia supporting smallholder milk production in post-conflict areas and with WFP in Yemen providing fortified milk to school children. Ms. Eriksson highlighted the importance of finding the "sweet spot" of overlapping goals and interests in forming successful partnerships and recommended the Swedish FAO Committee's publication *The private sector as a partner for sustainable development*.

Kirsi Chavda, Programme Coordinator at Siemenpuu Foundation, representing civil society in the Finnish FAO Committee spoke about the history and multistakeholder composition of the Committee which gathers multiple ministries, civil society and representatives of the Sami indigenous people. Ms. Chavda outlined that from a civil society perspective the Finnish FAO Committee had contributed to a better understanding of the work of FAO and was a great forum for civil society to engage in and contribute to the formulation of Finland's priorities for FAO.

Martijn Sonneveld, Chairman of the Swiss National FAO Committee, shared his view on success factors for multistakeholder collaboration drawn from the Committee. Mr. Sonneveld mentioned the importance of having technical and method competence in the Committee and basing the work on evidence at hand and link it to issues of strategic importance to Switzerland as well as ongoing CFS workstreams while focusing on areas where multistakeholder dialogue is particularly useful and can help reduce polarisation.

Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General at FAO was the closing panellist and emphasised how multistakeholder initiatives were more needed than ever in the context of continuously high levels of global food insecurity and. Ms. Bechdol highlighted the complexities of food systems transformation and that there needs to be forums for discussing difficult and controversial issues, underlining the importance of both FAO and National FAO Committees. Ms. Bechdol remarked that she was encouraged by the structure and work of the National FAO Committees which could be further promoted by FAO and with its membership. Ms. Bechdol saw opportunities to increase visibility through National Committee members visiting FAO and to promote their relationships with FAO's Technical and Country Offices.

Fredrik Alfer, Deputy Director-General at the Ministry for Rural Affairs and Infrastructure of Sweden, highlighted that inclusiveness through multistakeholder approaches is not only the right thing to do but also leads to more informed decision making and better results. In closing Mr. Alfer remarked that he hoped that the side event would contribute to strengthening the role National FAO Committees and inspire the formation of new ones.